1: Lorimer T-3 (1920-4; 1934-5) 1938 AV7 Burusho AV7

The Burusho of Hunza

by E. O. LORIMER

101 131 133 197 THE small state of Hunza is the most northerly in British India. It consists for the most part of a close-packed mass of unscaled and unscalable mountain peaks over 20,000 feet, seamed by untrodden rivers of snow and ice; as might be anticipated, it is mainly uninhabited. Its frontiers march with Afghanistan on the northwest and with Chinese Turkestan on the north and northeast. But where the Hunza river has cut its way down from the Pamirs to join the Gilgit river and ultimately the Indus, there remain, clinging to the mountain sides, a few sloping, rocky terraces which, if water can be brought to them, can with diligence be rendered fit for human habitation. These oases of green amidst the barren desolation of rock and cliff and mountain peak are the habitat of a sturdy mountain people, the Burusho, speaking a difficult but extremely interesting language, of so great antiquity that no affinity between it and any other known form of human speech has yet been traced by the comparative philologist.

114 121 When D.L. was posted as Political Agent, Gilgit (1920–24) he made it one of his leisure tasks to collect material for a scientific study of Burushaski (the language of the Burusho) the result of which is a three-volume work*—grammar, texts and vocabulary—of which the last volume is just issuing from the press. In 1934—ten years after his retirement—we returned unofficially to Hunza, armed indeed with a considerable knowledge of the language but with no facility in speaking it, to live amongst the peasants and make such a study of their customs, agriculture, economics, etc., as amateur anthropologists might.

181 609 643 During our four years in Gilgit we had not failed to discover that the Hunzukuts (dwellers in Hunza) were the most attractive of all the likable mountain peoples of the Gilgit Agency, the most physically prepossessing, the most intelligent and the most trustworthy. All classes in Hunza gave us a warm welcome, from the Mir—who has

113 * *The Burushaski Language*, by Lt.-Col. D. L. R. Lorimer, Oslo, 1935 (England: Williams and Norgate) published by the Norwegian Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture.

1: Lorimer T-3 (1920-4; 1934-5) 1938 AV7 Burusho AV7

[643] ruled his country in the humanest and wisest of benevolent autocracies, since the treaty of 1892 placed him on the throne of his murdered father
●181 and parricide brother—to our humbler neighbours in Aliabad, the
609 village four miles below the capital which we made our headquarters for fifteen months. As soon as the people grasped the purpose of our
[212] coming (which was not easy to explain to an illiterate people) they were overjoyed that a ' Sahib ' should trouble to learn their vernacular—a thing which no white man or woman had done before—and take an interest in their customs and hereditary lore. At first they would hesitate : ' but you have wheels (=machines) in England, and can do all these things better than we can '. Within a few days they were vying with each other in explaining, demonstrating and bringing ploughs, looms, winnowing forks, bows, stone cooking pots to the resthouse where we were installed, that D.L. might measure them and take ' studio portraits ' of them, ' for you mustn't put anything in the book about us that isn't exactly true '.

132 The entire life of the Hunzukuts is centred in water. The rain-
312 fall in the oasis level (7–9,000 feet), is negligible—we reckoned less than 2 inches per annum ; in default of any means of raising the
361 water, the river, flowing between its crumbly earthen cliffs, 500 or 1,000 feet below their fields is useless for irrigation ; there are no springs or wells ; hence all water for all purposes must be trapped high up at the snout of some side glacier and conveyed on galleried aqueducts across yawning gorges and the faces of sheer cliffs. The main water channel, the Dala, which supplies all the more recent villages of Hunza, ' the new settlements ' as they are called in contradistinction to the three original villages—Baltit the capital, Altit and Ganesh—travels some 8 or 10 miles in its circuitous route from the Herber glacier in the gorge behind Baltit, cradled between snow-peaks of 23,000 feet, before it peters out in a semicircular sweep round Aliabad.

312 The Dala was dug some three or four generations ago (90–100
412 years) with wooden shovels and wooden picks tipped with ibex horn, and represents an amazing feat of engineering skill for people without
816 any instruments of precision. The sluices that control the distribution of water—every teaspoonful of which is rigorously allotted—are of the simplest ; most often a slab of flattish stone plastered in with mud, sometimes a wooden shutter sliding in a rude wooden frame, sometimes when the water is being taken off to a lower level a circular hole in a stone slab, closed at need with a mushroom-shaped stopper, rough hewn from a solid tree trunk.

000 admire the view with a fine stretch of terraced fields below us, quaint little stone houses with groups of trees dotted here and there, and behind all, in every direction, the great mountains. On our way back there was a small boy, of perhaps thirteen, in the ex-lucerne field: "Who does this field belong to?" Just in the boastful way of small boys at home, he answered: "Oh, this is my field and that's my mulberry orchard you passed just now, and here's my house with the big mulberry tree over it, and this is my apricot tree and that is my father over there," pointing to our earlier friend who had moved some distance off. "I'm going home now," and he came along with us chattering away. "That's one of our lambs, and that's a kid." He passed his own door and walked all the way back with us. When we came to the bungalow David imitated his way of speaking: "And this is our house, and that's our chair in the verandah, and now we are going in to eat bread." The boy burst out laughing, evidently quite aware that we were chaffing him, waved his hand in farewell, and ran home at the double to tell his family all about it.

We had quite expected that the people would be friendly, but we had no idea they would be so spontaneously forthcoming and so quick to guess what we were driving at. Already by our second day we had made two sets of friends in the two nearest houses, and were sure of a welcome as we passed.

285 I asked Levy Kalbi next morning whether there was anyone who could make us a wastepaper basket. Within an hour or two he came along with an armful of willow twigs, squatted in the verandah: "If the Sahib will show what shape he would like, I'll make it now." So David made him a rough sketch, and in an hour or two he had finished a capacious basket that only needed to dry for a day or two in the sun. We asked what it should cost. He was almost hurt: "You shall not pay me for
NC it. I am already eating your salt. And a basket is nothing,
462 anyway." The day after he came along with a bunch of goat's hair under his arm which he was going to spin, and he thought we might like to watch. Oddly, the men spin the goat's hair
● 181 and the women the wool. All these Hunza people are refresh-

ingly competent. There's nothing connected with their every- 181 ●
day life that they cannot all do, and do well.

I saw a couple of pretty young women sitting together in a 283
little orchard spinning, as they watched a few sheep grazing on some odd blades of grass that grew between the trees. I scrambled over the wall and sat beside them to watch. They showed me what they were doing, and as we talked a fine old greybeard passed by driving a few goats and sheep downhill. "What are you doing there, Mother?" "Naját and Zaida are showing me how to spin." "But don't you *know*?" Half shamefaced, wholly amused, I tried to explain that unfortunately in our country most of the spinning was done with "wheels" (a general sort of word for machinery of any kind—a thing which, of course, they have never seen), and quite a lot of women besides myself did not know how to spin. He shook his head sadly as if to say, "What is the world coming to?" and stood a moment to watch us. Then sympathetically but firmly he said: "You'll never learn now, I'm afraid. You should have begun as a child; it takes a lot of practice. Goodbye." And as he went after his animals I saw him still gently shaking his head over my lost youth—which he could not regret more than I.

Wherever she is going, whether to the orchard to gather 283
twigs for firewood, or to the mill with a small sack of grain to 415
be ground, the woman carries under her arm a quaint little kidney-shaped receptacle for her well-washed wool. It is usually made of wild rowan bark. The menfolk when up at the summer pastures cut a strip of bark and bend the two ends towards the centre, forming two circular chambers. They then bury it for a year or two till it has taken the required shape. Then they lash on a thin wooden base and lash the two circular chambers together, and the wife's *pfurúkus* is ready for her. In one side she puts the clean wool which she teases by hand, removing any lumps or bits of straw, which she puts into the odd-shaped cavity between the two circles. She then coaxes bits of the cleaned lump into a neat ribbon of wool about 6 inches long and 1½ inches wide, and beats it well on her knee till it is perfectly flat and even and coheres together, and this little

2: Lorimer T-3 (1927-4: 1934-5) 1939 AV7 Burusho AV7

sweeper; I heard only one muezzin sound the Call to Prayer—and saw no one pay heed to it. He was chanting from a cliff in the Mir's garden, and the Mir gathers round him craftsmen of every sort. There are a few shrines in the country reputed holy—including two burial places of Moses within a few hundred yards of each other on one mountain side—where a few rags on sticks flutter unconvincingly in the wind; and one, the shrine of Baba Ghundi in Chupursan, some seven days' march above Báltít, is the object of an occasional pilgrimage. On Tuesdays and Fridays there are said to be services in the House of Assembly, which has supplanted the older Shiah mosque, but I never observed one of our servants or neighbours absent himself from work to go to them.

Yet the people are by no means without faith. It is difficult to know exactly what even church-going Christians of our own country effectively believe—it is impossible to be sure what one effectively believes oneself—so I can offer only a tentative guess as to the average person's simple credo. The Hunzukuts hold, I think, a comforting, unquestioning faith in a good and kindly God, whose ways they cannot profess to understand. They meet bereavement with a murmur that "there is no remedy against the will of God"; they bury their loved ones with genuine sorrow, but without anxiety. They feel that "it is well with the child," and vaguely trust that some day, somewhere, somehow, they will meet again. They assume as axiomatic that God asks of them diligence and truth, fair-dealing and goodwill. They are hard-working and thrifty, tolerant to others; kind and affectionate in the home, gentle to children and the aged; generous beyond their means to the orphan; truthful and just; and they go about their daily work in the happy confidence that God is well pleased. If they din no perfunctory prayers into His ears, there are occasions when they heartily and humbly pray, as will presently be seen.

The Hunzukuts is no mystic, no poet, no artist. This life claims his full attention if he is to live at all; philosophic speculation about "fixed fate, freewill, fore-knowledge absolute" does not line his brow or disturb his rest, nor does he "keep in duty through the toilsome day, because of praise

HARVEST THANKSGIVING

or blame that comes at night." I may be misinterpreting his attitude of mind. These are not subjects you can thresh out as easily as the wheat, and neither his vocabulary nor mine would have sufficed to tackle them. But this I can vouch for, that every face you see looks restfully content, breaks readily into a happy smile; that there are in Hunza no nervous gestures and no haunted eyes, and in normal life no irritable words. There is little amiss with a faith which spells happiness and high-principled living without debasing fear of Hell or over-conscious hope of Heaven.

When the final crops of every kind are safely in, the first duty of the paterfamilias is to take stock of the year's yield. So much is set aside for seed-grain, and not the direst shortage will tempt him to violate the sanctity of this; so much is set aside for rent (if he is a tenant) or for the tax due on any craft he pursues—the miller pays a very small tax on his mill, the weaver on his loom-pit, the khalifa on his learning; and all pay (alas!) a sum as "Peter's pence" to their spiritual head, the Agha Khan. Next he calculates the "emergency reserve" that may be needed for hospitality or charity during the coming year; this also is scrupulously put aside unground. On the rest he and his family must live till next harvest, under the careful rationing of the senior housewife, the importance of whose rôle I have already stressed.

The period of comparative—well-earned and welcome—rest that ensues, is inaugurated by a solemn watch-night service of prayer and thanksgiving in the House of Assembly. One of our main difficulties in the early days was to get due notice of such events beforehand. Our people were slow to realize that the normal routine of their affairs could really interest us. The first news we had of this Harvest Thanksgiving Service was one late evening in October when Dádo casually said as he bade us good-night: "I'm off now to the all-night prayer." In answer to our questions he told us that the Assembly Hall and the women's annex would be packed with the entire population, and that the khalifas in rotation would keep up all night a reading of the sacred Persian books and of the Qur'an. "And shall you be able to understand all that they read?" "Oh no,

144 countenance and color, not Indian but European.

If you took the first ten Hunzans that you met anywhere and put them in Europe, no one could doubt that they were Europeans. With the exception of a few clearly and unmistakably Chinese-appearing Hunzans, practically each one would pass as a European. It is understandable that a bit of Mongolian blood got mixed in because Hunza is right smack on the Chinese border.

● 181 The people of this country are unqualifiedly the 173 most energetic and industrious of all the people I came across in the East, which lends credence to the fact that they are of European origin.

173 Even before I went to Hunza I read carefully Ar-643 rian's *Life of Alexander the Great*. After seeing Hunza 174 and being impressed by the conviction that the people of Hunza did appear to be Europeans, I came back and made a further search through the *Life of Alexander the Great*.

It is an historical fact that Alexander took unto himself a wife when he was on his Indian campaign. He married Roxana, the daughter of Oxyartes who was king of Bactria. Bactria is in the northern part of Afghanistan—right smack against the Hunzan border.

Alexander had a posthumous son with Roxana. His name was Alexander Aegus.

So the Mir's claim might have sound historical basis. The Hunzans claim to trace their history back about 2,000 years. Well, Alexander married Roxana back in 327 B. C. So you see, the story may have its point.

I'll further state that the Mir himself looked exactly like one would expect a Mediterranean European to look. He might feign a relationship or descendancy from Alexander the Great, but he couldn't feign that Macedonian appearance.

164 177 people who retained their character, independence, freedom and primitive way of life. It is my belief that they are not much further advanced today than they were more than 2,000 years ago. Fearing that you may think I mean this in a derogatory manner, I would hurry and add that their way of life 2,000 years ago obviously was as good in many ways, or better, than our way of life today. But that is a measure for individual acceptance.

131 They owe their strength, their health, their longevity, their happiness to that wall of mountains that surrounds them and keeps out all but the boldest and most venturesome of invaders or travelers. They are surrounded by the most massive, the hugest, the greatest accumulation of mountain grandeur and awesomeness to be found anywhere on the world's surface. With such impenetrable guardians, it is not too difficult to understand the reason for their comparative privacy.

From what I saw and gathered, I found that one would not have to go many miles from any given point in Hunza to reach a location where no human being's foot had ever trod before. Should you have the desire to do just that, you can find millions of acres that have not felt the imprint of man within a few miles from most any given spot in Hunza.

181 Living in comparative isolation has made these people courageous and fearless. They are not stooges of civilization and all its implications. There, in Hunza, a man's individuality is still a characteristic trait to which they cling.

177 Now comes the big question—one that hundreds of people have already asked me . . . people who have but a faint knowledge or have heard a bit of news about Hunza and have been interested and fascinated by the myths and fables circulated about her—can Hunza

7:Tobe C,T-3 (1959)1960 AV7 Burusho AV7
Hunza

These men were carrying water from the holy of holies—the Ganges. They were intoxicated—not with wine, but with their faith. They were excited with the mysticism of their god; they were inspired; they were in seventh heaven. Yes, the gait of these divinely influenced people was close to the pace followed by the people of Hunza.

If I had seen somewhere along in my travels a Hunzan who slouched, dragged himself or in some other way showed a sign of weakness or debility, I would say so, but no such Hunzan did I see.

I fully realize that I scoffed at my Hunzan bearer that the Mir sent along with me from Kerimabad to Nomal, especially when he wanted to take the horses back from Chalt and leave us because he said he had blisters on his feet, due to the exceptionally hard push we had made that day, but remember, he was 20 years older than I! His feet probably told his age but he certainly didn't look it.

If there are sick and infirm men in Hunza, they must be exceptionally well-hidden, because I didn't see or find any.

Then, too, writers and observers of the people of Hunza always mention and stress the fact that they are a happy pleasant people. To this I must also assent. I did not see a sad or disgruntled Hunzan. I do not mean to suggest that they ran about the streets giggling and laughing, but they were of cheery, amiable countenance. Here I am going beyond those with whom I walked and talked and ate; I am delving into the citizenry that I passed on the roads or streets, those whose farms and homes we visited and also those whom I observed in passing.

Let me here illustrate another point. For example, it is understandable that we here in America, or people

181 in other countries distant from Hunza, would attach an aura of mystery or superhumanness to the people of Hunza, but the truth of the matter is that even in Pakistan the belief or the tale concerning the superiority of the Hunzan people also exists. In Karachi, when I mentioned I was going to Hunza or seeking to go to Hunza, ears pricked up quickly. They were interested, they were intrigued, for they knew and had heard tales of the prowess of the Hunzans.

A few weeks before I left home I learned that there was a Pakistani boy employed in Niagara-on-the-Lake and I made an attempt to contact him. My wife just about that time met the Pakistani lad and his wife at a social function and she told him that I wanted to see him and talk to him about Pakistan and about the people of Hunza. Then, when he heard that I intended to go to Hunza, he excitedly informed my wife and stressed that she be sure to tell me not to go because the roads in the mountains were terribly dangerous, that one could penetrate into that country only at the greatest of risk and danger and that many people had set out for Hunza and never been heard of again.

When my wife brought this tale to me, I was perturbed. I was worried and my wife was even more concerned. If a native of Pakistan, and not an illiterate, I want to remind you (this man was a technician), held these people in such awe and fear, you can see that the myth about the people of Hunza is universal.

114 147 It is further claimed that the people of Hunza have endurance that is unsurpassed by any other people on earth. I believe it was Eric Shipton, the famous mountain explorer, who said that the Hunzans had more endurance than even the Sherpa guides that are found on the borders of Nepal and Tibet. These Sherpas have long been considered the people with the greatest en-

7:Tobe C,T-3 (1959)1960 AV7 Burusho AV7

Hunza

Nagir

The Hunzans do not only show their superiority over the Nagirwals, but over others as well. The P.A. at Gilgit, in a discussion that I had with him, admitted that when the Hunzans moved down the valley to the Gilgit area, they showed their heritage by surpassing anyone else in the district when it came to working their lands and producing their crops. They worked harder, they worked longer, they worked better. They used their experience and intelligence to greater advantage, with the net result that they were soon buying more and better land. 157

So far only a few of the Hunzans have come down to Gilgit, but the native Gilgiti farmers are already showing their resentment. Obviously they find it difficult to compete with the Hunzans on an equal basis. [167]

I compared the Hunzans with the Scotch people and I think the comparison has many realistic qualities. Both peoples live in a more or less barren, hilly, rocky, rough country. Both peoples have learned the value of being frugal and thrifty. They waste naught and want naught. They are chiefly outdoorsmen. They are strongly nationalistic. Then, too, they are physically independent and have little or no fear of anyone. 181

When I was talking to the P.A. I called the Hunzans "the Scotsmen of the East" . . . and I trust the Scotsmen won't be offended. In fact, they should be flattered.

Where I think the people of Hunza gain most of their superiority is in leadership. From the little research and reading I have done on the subject, it appears that for many long years the Hunzans have had good capable leaders—really strong men who ruled their people with a firm hand. 643

In reading the autobiography of the Mir's grandfather, one quickly sees that he was not only a man of action but one of ability, foresight and reason.

Now I did not meet the Mir of Nagir. Although I [123]

842 The country cannot afford or support a greater population than exists there today. Therefore, they will have to practice birth control, which it is claimed they already do but with which I disagree, or they will have to send their youths out of the country, which, as a matter of fact, they are doing.

311 There is very little chance of finding or creating more arable land in the country. I believe they have practically every inch tilled now that is tillable. There is no land left in that part of the world that is yet to be broken.

000 Their land and their fruit trees are their whole life. Their health, pleasant dispositions and industry, which they possess to the highest degree, are their entire wealth.

578 Quarreling among children and adults seems to be something that doesn't exist in Hunza. I found close affection and love was the general, accepted pattern throughout the area. This is even more surprising when you realize that most of the houses in the villages are built practically one on top of the other.

• 181 152 It was clear to me that they knew no worries and that they create no worries. There was absence of jealousy, greed, covetousness and hurry. Their outlook on life is most unpretentious. They are proud people and do not grovel before anyone and they do not pretend to be anything but what they really are.

433 Every Hunzan farmer is completely self-sufficient, even though he might trade for something that is in short supply or that he would like to possess. He grows wheat, barley, potatoes, millet, cabbage, beans, onions, lettuce and occasionally a bit of rice. In their orchards they have apricots, apples, pears, walnuts and mulberries. Every family has sheep and goats and sometimes a cow or an ox, and occasionally a yak. They till

7:Tobe C, T-3 (1959)1960 AV7 Burusho AV7
Hunza

their own land. They spin their own wool. Then they weave it into cloth from which they cut and sew their clothes. However he can also buy or trade for woolen cloth or he can have his own wool woven for him.

They have little or no money. The few dollars that he might get during the year would come from the expeditions that congregate in the area and hire the Hunzans as porters. And they are unsurpassed at this difficult and arduous work.

A man has a right to inflict corporal punishment upon his wife if she nags him. Perhaps that is why the men of Hunza have that cheerful look.

The children are never neglected because the parents are always at home. Further, the children do their share of the work in the fields and are taught to do so from early childhood. This also eliminates juvenile delinquency.

The people of Hunza have splendid dispositions. They are genial, pleasant, smiling and cheerful. They have deep respect for authority, profound love of the land, affection, compassion and understanding for their neighbors and they are most hospitable to strangers. They hold their heads high, their chests out and they are strong, honest and hard-working. To me this showed clearly and positively that people can live and that agriculture can exist and thrive without chemistry, chemical fertilizers, chemical sprays or synthetic medicines and drugs.

They enjoy happiness without modernization, long life without doctors, nurses and hospitals, democracy without bureaucracy, law and order without police and self-sufficiency without money. Part of the answer, if not most of it, is their loyalty to and their faith in their land, a pure case of unremitting agriculture and putting everything back into the soil which was taken

them from any other group of people that I have met or seen anywhere.

I discussed the situation with friends and acquaintances. I mentioned it to folks whose experience and intelligence I respected—thinking, hoping that they could give me a clue to the answer. But nothing came of it. I was still floundering and groping about in the dark.

'Twas a blizzardly night in March . . . I sat in my office at the nursery . . . writing. Suddenly the answer came to me . . . and it was so obvious, so apparent and so simple that I am ashamed I hadn't come up with the answer on the spot.

Perhaps you are more alert than I and you have already guessed the answer. And if you have, I compliment you. You have your ears and your eyes open . . . and you have benefited greatly from the written experiences of my travels in Hunza.

The big thing—the important thing—the simple thing that I discovered was the fact that the people of Hunza find joy and happiness in simply being alive. Living, in itself, is to them the grandest, the greatest and the most fascinating adventure in the world.

We in the Western world have 1,001 things to please us, to entertain and excite us, to thrill and enthrall us. The people of Hunza—they have their little cradle in the sun and that is all!

We must have cocktails and drinking parties to get ourselves into a mood. We must parade off to the theatre to get a laugh and relaxation. We go to a doctor or a priest for comfort and assurance.

The people of Hunza get their joy and pleasures out of the simple things in life—the natural, the commonplace, the ordinary. They are, from infancy to old age, continually attuned to nature. They are intelligent—

• /8/ they look intelligent. Yet the happy carefree outlook of a child bespeaks their countenance.

000 We seek relief from our troubles and woes by entertainment, excitement, smoking and drinking.

Let us face the realities of life for what they are. Is it not a fact that our way—our modern way of living—has got out of hand and is now too much for us and we just can't cope with it? That is why we release our pent up furies and frustrations in drink and smoke. Is it not true that we have become a serious, troubled, dour race of people and that too many—yes, too many—responsibilities are oppressing our minds?

No people in the world's history have been so burdened with responsibilities as we in America. The world wars weren't ours, yet we had to become involved . . . and the world looks to us now to enforce or maintain world peace. And what a herculean task it is!

We have the burden of education—not only for ourselves, but for most of the world. Our people have become sick and disease ridden. We have to worry about the maintenance of elaborate homes, automobiles, appliances. We have to consider our vocations and our means and sources of food. We must be ever vigilant . . . there's both foreign encroachment and our own politicians to consider. We have to worry about mortgages, loans, financing, insurance, taxes, interest and the world's most expensive political setups.

We must not only be concerned about our wives and our children and ourselves, but we must share the responsibilities of our neighbors, our countrymen, and now, we have also included the rest of the world.

There no longer exists such a thing as individuality within us . . . for we are but one of almost 200,000,000 bees—all busy and buzzing in unison, creating a great institution. But who wants to be a bee in a hive or a

7:Tobe C, T-3 (1959)1960 AV7 Burusho AV7
Hunza

number in an institution?

Let's face it! Isn't it true that our responsibilities are becoming too big a burden for us? Aren't we trying or attempting to encompass a little too much? Aren't we reaching beyond our ken—beyond our abilities?

You see, the people of Hunza aren't burdened with all the things I've mentioned above, and therefore, it is easy to see why they enjoy just being alive and healthy.

It must be recognized that the people of Hunza lead, probably, what is the most simple life known to any people on the face of the globe. They are not trying to master the world, their own fates or that of their neighbors. They are busily occupied in looking after just themselves.

Selfish? I don't know. They certainly don't interfere with anyone else or ask anyone for anything. In Hunza a man's responsibilities consist of tilling a bit of soil to produce food for himself and the members of his household. The house is actually small—usually a two-roomed affair. He has to make provisions to store sufficient food for his winter needs—plus a mite for a neighbor who might run short. Then he may be called upon to contribute a day's work or two a year on the roads or toward maintaining the aqueducts. And that's it! From there on out, his time, his life and his liberty are his own. They even have it better than the red Indians in America . . . because the Hunzans have a permanent abode rather than a windy tent.

Do you think that mankind can improve on a setup like that?

It could be that some of our difficulties stem from the fact that we try to work against nature, whereas in Hunza, when nature pulls the switch and brings on winter or creates other conditions that bring activities

to a halt, the people are resigned to it for the time being. They have found that they can't stem the avalanches or the receding glaciers. So they work with them, instead of against them.

It would be sheer "humbug" on my part to tell you that the people of Hunza have no responsibilities and no worries or cares, because we all know that no human being can exist on the face of the earth without some. But the people of Hunza have learned not to burden themselves with any more than they can help . . . and they stay quite clear of entanglements.

Most of their cares consist of sowing their crops at the right time, harvesting them before the bad weather sets in, storing sufficient to last through the winter and procuring a bit of fuel.

They lack the continued harassments of our modern, up-to-date civilization. One big thing to bear in mind is that the people of Hunza do not have an expensive, elaborate, many tentacled political setup. Hunza has a government of the simplest form . . . and apart from being an emblem and a guide, it does not interfere with or does very little for the inhabitants of Hunza. No government does anything for any people that the people could not do better for themselves if properly organized . . . this holds true anywhere in the world.

Have we ever stopped to think just what a large proportion of our daily work goes for maintaining our government and for which we receive neither remuneration nor thanks? During World War II, I was astounded to learn that it took 30 men behind the lines to keep one man up front. I discredited it and refused to believe it . . . but subsequently, after tracking down the source of the report, I learned that it is true and that for every fighting man there must be 30 down the line to lend support.

[P44-B]

164 into the "fine, barrel chests" reported
146 by travelers. (I found that when they took off their shirts the fine, barrel chests revealed strong asymmetry, with ribs notably warped by rickets.) During my first winter, I developed a typical case of beriberi, even though my diet was more varied than theirs and was adequate in quantity.

133 The basic trouble rests not with the
161 Hunzas, who are neat, intelligent, and
[19] hard-working, but with their country. There is no flat land in all of Hunza.
[36] Villages and farms are built on alluvial
[31] cones—fan-shaped masses of gravel dumped by streams rushing from mountain glaciers down into the valleys—and the small cultivated areas simply are not extensive enough to support the constantly increasing population. (The Mir estimated the population of his country at 25,000 in 1951. According to one of the last of the British agents stationed in nearby Gilgit, Hunza's population was increasing at the rate of 30 per cent each [62] decade. Rising emigration and the absence of written records obscure the reality, as one might imagine.)

311 Hunza's slopes are so steep they
241 must be terraced by the laborious construction of hand-built retaining walls of boulders. I measured one cultivated slope of 60 degrees—so steep that the retaining walls were twice as high as the miniature plots they supported. And sometimes Hunza farmers will even create arable soil on top of bare rock. After a crescent-shaped wall at the foot of any fairly gentle rock slope is built high enough so the top of the wall is level with the top of the slope, the wall is carefully chinked and mud-caulked, then sandy water from the nearest irrigation ditch is admitted to make a small pond. When the sand settles out, the clear water is drained, and more sandy water is admitted. This process is repeated for about two years, until enough sand accumulates to allow cultivation.

134 Much of the "soil" of Hunza fields
311 is thus not really soil. Rather, it is a jumble of unweathered boulders, [132] gravel, and sand. Since Hunza is a
[13] cool but exceedingly dry desert, practically no plant food is formed. The scant rain that falls soaks rapidly through the spongy sand, leaches out any trace of plant food that may be present, and carries it down to the river. Not even sagebrush will grow on the unirrigated areas, so most slopes are barren. Newly irrigated areas are

134 so sterile that Hunzas have told me, "If
311 you irrigate new land, you must eat for
five years somewhere else."

241 HUNZAS are skillful at building a
134 limited fertility into their sterile
[237] material, given enough time. All sheep
manure is carefully saved, and the
fields are fertilized with it four times
during each growing season. Frequent
irrigation works with summer warmth
and mountain ozone to decompose the
manure rapidly. The growing plants
thus have a few weeks of available
food after each fertilization, before
drainage again removes the plant
food. Hunza farming is actually hy-
droponic gardening, with the soil func-
tioning merely to anchor the plants.

Plainly, the plants will receive
enough of only those foods that occur
abundantly in sheep manure. Nitrates,
phosphates, and probably calcium are
deficient. Yields of wheat and alfalfa
are notably lower per acre than are
yields from better-fertilized American
acres. Apricot trees generally have
reddish leaves at the growing tips, a
sure sign of soil deficiencies.

433 Even the most painstaking hydro-
241 ponic gardening cannot compensate
237 for deficiencies in the food chemistry.
Moreover, their system makes Hunza
one of the few countries where an
agrarian economy is absolutely de-
pendent upon the pastoral economy.
[237] Even in the high mountain summer
pastures, the sheep are carefuly herded
into small cotes in order to preserve
each night's droppings. Every few
days a man climbs down the steep trail
with a load of manure on his back.
Effectively, the fertility of the high
mountain pastures is being transferred
down to Hunza's fields.

433 Unfortunately, the human popula-
161 tion has already grown so large that
the fields cannot provide sufficient
167 food. Hunzas are moving out of their
country in rather large numbers. Al-
though the exact total of annual
emigrees is unknown, it is clear that
most of them go to the lower villages
near Gilgit, where they soon displace
their less industrious Sheena predeces-
[64] sors. Hundreds of Hunza's young men
464 join the Pakistan army. Others take
work as servants, where their honesty,
[181] industry, and common sense make
them highly valued. The Hunzas
realize, as certain Western tourists do
not, that their country is a land of
little food, and even less opportunity
for the future, picturesque as it is.

4: Durand G-3 (1888-93) 1900 AV1 Kashmir
Burusho AV 7

173 of Nagar, and the name is supposed to be the corruption of the Chinese word Tung, which forms part of many Chinese titles. The Thum was an absolute ruler, who killed or sold his subjects into slavery as it pleased him; but that the rule, though despotic, must have been tempered by common-sense is shown by the fact that the office of wazir, or minister, has gone down in unbroken succession from father to son for seven generations.

643 Safdar Ali, the Thum at the time of my visit, had murdered his father, Ghazan Khan, three years previously, and his character caused me some anxiety. He had, it is true, as had the Nagar chief, written to Government, and asked that a mission should be sent to him, but he bore an ill name for treachery, cruelty, 795 and weakness. In common with most of his subjects he belonged to the Maulai sect, the followers of which, though calling themselves Shiahs, were a bye-word on the frontier for their shameless violation of all the [837] leading Mahomedan doctrines. The men drank wine freely; their morals were of the loosest; a man considered himself honoured if his wife attracted the Thum's attentions, and hospitality enjoined that he should offer her to his guest. Withal, they were • 181 cheery, pleasant people to deal with, slight, wiry, and very active, first-rate mountaineers, and of untiring energy, a great contrast to the Shins of 721 Gilgit. With none of the bloodthirstiness of the Pathan they yet had a great reputation for bravery, and had more than once invaded and severely handled their Nagar neighbours, who were said never to have carried the war into their country.

000 The cultivation in Hunza is very limited; the

4: Durand G-3 (1888-93) 1900 AV1 Kashmir
Burush. AV7

795 nearly as lax in their Mahomedanism as the people of Hunza. There is considerably more cultivation
241 than in Hunza, the land is better watered, and the main slopes of the mountains enclosing the country face north, and are consequently covered with forest. The land has the full benefit of the summer sun, and
[135] the crops are splendid. The untold profusion of the apricots, and the quantity of gold which can be washed out of every stream, has gained the country amongst the Nagaris themselves the name of
144 "the land of gold and apricots." The people, though
721 of identically the same stock as those of Hunza, show
511 marked differences. They are less warlike than their
567 neighbours; they were never implicated in the raiding of caravans, owing principally perhaps to there being no outlet to the north or east leading to caravan tracks; they are, on the whole, better off, owing to the better agricultural conditions, and the possession of splendid grazing grounds; and last, but not least, slavery is unknown amongst them — that is, they would not brook their king selling them or their children, and the exile of the present ruler's eldest son is said to have been caused by his attempt to
• 181 introduce the custom from Hunza. The men are not
829 so bright and cheery as their Hunza cousins; they strike one as more sedate and morose, and their reputation for dash and gallantry is far lower. The reason they themselves assign for the difference, and the one generally accepted, is that in the winter, when the sun is in the south, the great mountains backing their valley shut out all the light and warmth, of which Hunza facing south enjoys the full benefit, and that the depressing effect of passing day after day in the cold and dark-

4: Durand G-S (1888-93) 1900 AV1 Kashmir
Burusho AV7

181 829 ness of their uncomfortable houses leaves an indelible mark on the national character.

342 [351] It must be remembered that a house in the Hindu-Kush has no glass windows, no comfortable fire-place and chimney corner. The better-class houses are built round a courtyard, but the rooms rarely have windows, all light comes from the 354 open door or from a skylight. Immediately below 352 the skylight is a square open hearth, on which smoulders a fire; round this run raised platforms, on which are the beds and household paraphernalia; the smoke, before escaping through the roof, fills the whole room, blackens walls and pillars, and chokes the unfortunate inhabitants. If it is very cold, or raining and snowing heavily, the skylight is shut, the room is in pitchy darkness but for a sputtering torch, and the atmosphere horrible. It is no wonder that an existence under these circumstances should be rather depressing, and in Nagar the people get the full benefit of it, for there are several villages which during December and January only get twenty 461 minutes' sun a day; some, I believe, get none. The men having no agricultural work on hand, owing to the land being frost-bound, there is practically nothing for them to do during the winter months but to sit idly round their smouldering fires for about sixteen hours out of the twenty-four.

133 487 Nagar has practically no outlet except down the river to Gilgit. Shut in to the east by impassable mountains, and to the south by the great Rakapushi range, there is only the bare possibility of reaching 487 Baltistan by the Hispar pass: there is a tradition that the road was once used, but it is very doubtful if

4: Durand G-3 (1888-93) 1900 AV1 Kashmir
Burush. AV7

the story is true. It needs a mountaineer properly equipped to make use of this road, which runs over one of the greatest glacier masses of the world, as Sir Martin Conway shows in his book, "Climbing and Exploration in the Karakoram Himalayas." Dependent therefore on Gilgit for their luxuries, such as weapons, cotton cloth, salt, sugar, etc., most of them the produce of India, or on Hunza for the products of Turkestan and Central Asia, the Nagar people were more easily squeezable than their neighbours across the water, and not so aggressively insolent in their dealings with Kashmir. They were as little to be trusted, however. It was one of their chiefs who many years ago called in the Kashmir arms to help him break his rival Thum, and who, once the Kashmiris were well within the country, fraternised with his enemy, and turned upon his late allies; and Nagar forces had played a prominent part in the disturbances of the past year. The want of dash on the part of the Nagar warriors was well marked on the former occasion; no badly-disciplined army, abandoned by its chiefs as were the Kashmir forces in the former case, should have been able to escape. Pathans would have wiped them out to a man, even Chitralis would have inflicted terrible loss, but the Nagar men allowed their enemies to get out of the country scathless, and even to save, owing to the gallantry of one officer, their small mountain guns carried by coolies. These were points which were worth considering and laying up for future guidance.

1: Leitner L-8 (1868-93) 18937 AVS Dard
Burush. AV7

133 are very steep, involving at times springing from one ledge of a rock to another, or dropping on to it from a height of six feet, when, if the footing is lost, the wild torrent sweeps
• 181 one away. Colonel Biddulph does not credit the Nagyris with bravery. History, however, does not bear out his statement; and the defeat inflicted on the Kashmir troops under Nathu Shah in 1848 is a lesson even for the arrogance of a civilized invader armed with the latest rifle.
[533] The Nagyris are certainly not without culture; in music they were proficient before the Muhammadan piety of the Shiah sect somewhat tabooed the art. At all events, they are different in character from the Hunzas with whom they share the same language, and their chiefs the same ancestry.
721 The Hunzas, in whom a remnant of the Huns may be
567 found, were great kidnappers; but under Kashmir influence they stopped raiding since 1869, till the confusion incidental to our interference revived their gone occupation. Indeed, it is asserted on good authority, that even our ally of Chitrál, who had somewhat abandoned the practice of selling his Shiah or Kalásha Kafir subjects into slavery, and who had so disposed of the miners for not working his ruby mines to profit, has now returned to the trade in men, "with the aid of our present of rifles and our moral support." Nor is Bokhara said to be behind Chitrál in the revival of the slave-trade from Darwáz, in spite of Russian influence; so that we have the remarkable instance of two great Powers both opposed to slavery and the slave-trade, having revived it in their approach to one another. Nor is a third Power, quite blameless in the matter; for when we worried Hunza, that robber-nest remembered its old allegiance to distant Kitái and arranged with the Chinese authorities at Yarkand to be informed of the departure of a caravan. Then, after intercepting it on the Kulanuldi road, the Hunzas would take those they kidnapped from it back for sale to Yarkand!

000 As a matter of fact, we have now a scramble for the regions surrounding and extending into the Pamirs by

1: Leitner L-3 (1866-68) 1893? AV3 Dard
Burusha AV7

loss of their independence,—I venture to point out the impolicy and injustice of interfering with these principalities.

I have already referred to a letter from the venerable chief of Nagyr, in which he strongly commends to my care one of his sons, Raja Habibulla, as a well-wisher of the English Government. Indeed, he has absolutely done nothing to justify any attack on the integrity of his country; and before we invade it other means to secure peace should be tried. I have no doubt that I, for one, could induce him to comply with everything in reason, if reason, and not an excuse for taking his country, is desired. Nagyr has never joined Hunza in kidnapping expeditions, as is alleged in the above-quoted paragraph. Indeed, slavery is an abomination to the pious and peaceful agriculturist of that interesting country. The Nagyris are musical and were fond of dances, polo, ibex *battue*-hunting, archery and shooting from horseback, and other manly exercises; but the growing piety of the race has latterly proscribed music and dancing. The accompanying drawing of a Nagyri dance in the neighbouring Gilgit gives a good idea of similar performances at Nagyr.

The country is full of legendary lore, but less so than Hunza, where Grimm's fairy tales appear to be translated into actual life. No war is undertaken except at the supposed command of an unseen fairy, whose drum is on such occasions sounded in the mountains. Ecstatic women, inhaling the smoke of a cedar-branch, announce the future, tell the past, and describe the state of things in neighbouring valleys. They are thus alike the prophets, the historians, and the journalists of the tribe. They probably now tell their indignant hearers how, under the pretext of shooting or of commerce, Europeans have visited their country, which they now threaten to destroy with strange and murderous weapons; but Hunza is "ayeshó," or "heaven-born," and the fairies, if not the inaccessible nature of the country, will continue to protect it.

The folly of invading Hunza and Nagyr is even greater

1: Lekner L-3 (1866-93) 1893? AV3 Dard AV3 Burusho AV7

D 173

ready to take a tin containing pork and could scarcely be restrained till "lawful" food was brought to them by my servants. Men were forced to go with the troops. One Hakim Ali Shah, a teacher at Amritsar, was compelled to serve as a physician, a post to which he had no other claim, except that his name happened to be "Hakim." I rescued him. A virulent fever was destroying the troops at Gilgit, who, even after the siege of the fort had been raised, were liable to be shot down by prowlers from the tribes within a few yards of the fort. I ordered the fort, etc., to be cleaned and, although myself in danger of life from my Kashmir friends, if not from the tribes, I insisted on my orders being obeyed, the assumption of an authoritative tone being often a traveller's only chance of safety among Asiatics. I distributed medicine among the troops and was afterwards told in Durbar by the Maharajah that some medicine which I had sent to Wazir Zoraweru, who was then on his Dureyl expedition, had saved his life.

D 177 [164] [771]

Since then, the Dards have made the acquaintance of diseases for which there was not even a name in 1866. I refer chiefly to cholera and syphilis, which Kashmiri and Indian troops have introduced. Simultaneously, the indigenous methods of treatment, which are full of lessons for the impartial learner, are dying out. Industrial handicrafts, historical superstitions or reminiscences, national feasts which existed in 1866 exist no longer, and what exists now will soon vanish before the monotony of orthodox Muhammadanism and the vulgarity of so-called European civilization. "*Und der Götter bunt Gewimmel, Hat sogleich das stille Haus geleert.*" The fairies and prophetesses of Dardistan are silent, the Tham of Hunza no longer brings down rain, the family axes are broken, the genealogists have been destroyed, and the sacred drum is heard no longer. The quaint computations of age, of months, seasons, years and half-years, and the strange observations of shadows thrown at various times are dying out or are already dead. Worse than all for enquiry into ancient human history, the languages which contain the words of "*what once was*," are being flooded by foreign dialects, and what may survive will no longer appeal to the national understanding. This result is most lamentable as regards Hunza, where the oldest human speech still showed elementary processes of development. I fear that my attempt to commit, for the first time, to writing, in an adapted *Persian* character, the Khajuná language, has only been followed in a document of honour which the venerable Chief of Nagyr sent me some years ago. Already do some European writers call him and his people "ignorant" when their own ignorance is alone deserving of censure. I deeply regret that the friendship of so many Dard Chiefs for me has made them unsuspicious of Europeans, and may have thus indirectly led to the loss of their independence, but I rejoice that for over twenty-five years I have not attracted the European adventurer to Dardistan by saying anything about Pliny's "*fertilissimi sunt auri Dardæ*," except in Khajuná Ethnographical Dialogues in the "Hunza-Nagyr Handbook," which exploiters were not likely to read. Now others have published the fact, but not the accompanying risks.

D [805]

D [197]

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D 131 B 181 000

As Kandiá is learned, Nagyr pious, Chilás puritanical, and all true Dard tribes essentially peaceful and virtuously republican, so, no doubt, Hunza was the country of free love and of raiding, that had ceased in 1865, which are practically revived (see Appendix I.). I doubt, however, whether

~~12~~ Biddulph G-3 (1873-1878) 1880 ~~AU1 Afghanistan AU1~~
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Burusho AV7

natives of other parts. Their constitutions also seem to want stamina, and they succumb easily to disease or change of climate. This want of physical energy and enterprise is most strongly marked in the Shin caste. They consider husbandry the only honourable employment for men, and so averse are they to labour, that the poorest of them employ Baltis in their agriculture, which is of a rude and slovenly kind. Numbers of Baltis come yearly into the Gilgit district to serve for hire; they receive 6 lbs. of grain for a day's labour.

D 142 147 D 464

In disposition they are tractable, good-tempered, fond of rejoicing and merry-making, neither cruel nor quarrelsome, and they submit readily to constituted authority. The worst cruelties perpetrated in the wars between Yassin and Cashmere are distinctly attributable to the Ashimadek class of Yassin and Chitral, who compare unfavourably with the older tribes in this respect. In all the accounts of the Kunjooti depredations on caravans, and of wars in which the people of Hunza and Nager were concerned, there are no records of wanton cruelty or of the exercise of torture. The women are pleasing-looking when young, but are not particularly handsome. Exception must be made in favour of the Khos of the "Fakir Mushkin" class in Chitral, who show certain physical peculiarities not shared by the other Dard tribes. In person they are Indo-Aryans of a high type, not unlike the Shins of the Indus Valley about Koli, but more handsome, with oval faces and finely-cut features, which would compare favourably with the highest types of beauty in Europe. The most striking feature about them, and one which distinguishes them from all other Dard tribes, is their large and beautiful eyes, which remind one of English gypsies, with whom they share the reputation of being expert thieves. They have also unusually fine hair, of which they are very proud. The women of Chitral were formerly sought out for their beauty in the slave markets of Cabul, Peshawur, and Badakhshan. The fairest complexions are to be seen among the Boorish of Hunza and Yassin, where individuals may be found who would pass for Europeans. Among them red hair is not uncommon.

B 181 D 181 D 142 B 142

In dress there is little variety. The loose woollen robe described by Mr. Drew is worn also in Sirikol, Wakhan, Zebak, Chitral, Yassin, Hunza, Nager, and the Yaghestan Valleys. Those who can afford it substitute in summer a cotton robe of the same cut, with quilted edges, worked round the neck

D 291 B 291